

R 2.6

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Read the passages and answer the following question(s).

The Mighty Oak



In many parts of the country, the autumn landscape becomes a beautiful panorama of red, orange, and yellow like a watercolor painting. Trees and shrubs along the roads and in the forests turn brilliant colors, preparing to shed their leaves for the winter. One of the most majestic trees is the oak tree.

Oak trees are the genus *Quercus Robur*, which comes from a Latin term meaning "fine tree." They can be found mostly in northern temperate zones, but grow equally well in warm states such as California. Most oaks are deciduous, but in climates such as those in the Southern United States they are evergreen, which means their leaves don't change color and fall off each year.

The acorn is the seed of an oak. Each acorn contains a single seed and is fixed in a woody cup that looks like a hat. Oaks begin producing acorns when they are 20 years old; however, some will not produce their first acorns until the age of 50. By the time the oak is 70 to 80 years old, it will make thousands of acorns every year. Though this may sound like a lot of acorns, only about one out of every 10,000 goes on to become a tree. The rest of the acorns are eaten as food or buried by squirrels for later use, only to be hidden by the fallen leaves of the tree.

Oak trees have become an important part of life. They are a major source of hardwood lumber, which is often used for building ships, furniture, floors, railroad ties, barrels, and tool handles. Oak trees provide habitat and food for thousands of types of animals and insects. The bark can be used for medicine, tanning, and dyes; the bark of the cork oak is used to create cork. Acorns become hog feed, oil, and food; in fact, acorns were one of the most important food sources to some Native Americans.

The oak has always been a symbol of strength because it grows to become so large and it lives for hundreds of years. Currently, the largest certified oak is the "Seven Sisters Oak" in Louisiana. It is 37 feet in circumference and is estimated to be over 1000 years old.

So the next time you're looking for some good shade, a place to hang a swing, or a spot to build a tree house, consider an oak tree. The majestic, sturdy oak can provide shelter and sustenance for people and animals alike.

Planting Acorns

Excerpt from a brochure entitled, "Managing Natural Resources: Planting Acorns." ¹

Collecting Acorns

The best time to gather acorns for planting is in the early fall. This is when the acorns are just starting to turn from green to brown, and some are starting to fall off the tree. Try to pick the acorns directly off the tree rather than picking up the ones on the ground. Acorns that have already fallen are usually cracked and too dry to germinate properly. An acorn is ready for picking when the cap comes off easily. If the cap doesn't pop off with a gentle twist, the acorn is too green.

Storing Acorns

Before storing, twist the caps off and rinse the acorns in cool to lukewarm water to which some bleach has been added—1/2 cup for every gallon of water. This acts as a mild disinfectant and cuts down on mold. Lay the acorns on paper towels to dry completely. Once dry, place the acorns in a zip-lock plastic bag, and store them in a refrigerator until you are ready to plant them. Acorns kept cold for 30 days germinate faster than those planted too soon. However, acorns stored for more than a few months will not grow.

Planting Acorns

Acorns should be planted in early November through early March. Plant each seed about one inch deep. Use a trowel to dig a hole that's slightly deeper than one inch, and then fill in the extra space with some loose dirt. This gives the acorn's root something easy to dig through. Lay the acorn on its side and fill in the rest of the dirt on top of the acorn. Finally, you must water the dirt thoroughly.

1. See other brochures in this series available through the Department of Natural Resources, Washington, D.C.

(Question 1)

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According to the passage, what is an indication that an acorn is ready for picking?

- A** It is ready when the acorn is cracked and has fallen off the tree.
- B** It is ready when the cap of the acorn comes off easily.
- C** It is ready to pick in the month of March.
- D** It is ready when it is 20 years old.

Read the passage and answer the following question(s).

Weaving Your Way Through the Web

An excerpt from The Student Research Manual

Introduction

Can you imagine writing a research paper before the invention of the computer and the Internet? No search engines, no quick list of reference links, no instant cutting-and-pasting of famous quotes, or hints on bibliographic style—and no spell check. Students spent endless hours in the library hoping that no one had checked out the sources they needed; then came the task of transferring by hand facts and information onto note cards and source references onto bibliography cards. Once the students had reviewed their notes, prioritized their information, and constructed a thesis statement, they were ready to begin writing. It's easier today. Or is it?

The Internet Age

As a student today, you still must go through the process of locating suitable sources for topics, but the tool has changed. The access of information via the web has made research quicker, and for some people, more interesting. Clicking through potential links instead of paging through volumes of encyclopedias, journals, or indexes can be appealing, and even fun. This, combined with word processing applications that help with revisions, grammar, and formatting, has revolutionized the research process. Unfortunately, this all comes with inevitable pitfalls.

A Source Is a Source, Right?

To many students, any source on the Internet is just that—a source. However, unlike a library or media center, the sources on the Internet often do not follow any criteria regarding quality. Anyone can create and publish a home page on the web. Students must verify the reliability of the source before using it.

As you browse through the Internet, keep an eye on **domain extensions** at the end of a web address (URL).^{*} A domain provides information about the authority of the source and may also give you a hint about whether the source is biased. For example, if you are writing a paper on the Civil War, look for sites that end in .gov. Here you will find The National Archives, artifact sites, and other U.S. primary source documents. If you want to search for a point of view on a topic, sites that end in .com are often sounding boards for authors and may express a personal perspective.

The following is a sample list of helpful domains you may come across on the Internet:

- .com** – commercial entities
- .edu** – educational institutions and universities
- .gov** – reserved for United States government agencies
- .net** – network resources, usually Internet network providers
- .org** – nonprofit organizations
- .pro** – used by professionals such as attorneys and doctors

Hints for Finding the Right Source:

- Narrow your topic. Search by key words or categories from your topic.
- Too many websites retrieved? Add more specific key words. Too few websites retrieved? Try broadening your topic by entering more general key words.
- Is the website up-to-date? Is the content up-to-date? Remember, "date posted" does not mean that was when the content was written. "Date posted" refers to the date the website itself was updated or revised in some way.
- Beware of websites with fake or inaccurate information. One way to do this is to bookmark, or mark as a "favorite," three or four distinct sites on your topic. Compare and contrast the information based on up-to-date content, author's credentials, and bibliographic references. Can the references be verified?
- Are the links to other documents working? Nonworking links may be a clue that the site is no longer viable and that the information may be outdated.
- Is the website you are looking at the "top" of the website? Sometimes a search will take you to a site at any point and the content may lack full context. Go to the top of the website (first page or home page) and read the author's purpose and credentials.
- Caution: If you are asked to register in order to use a website, be careful. Some sites have fees. Other sites may ask for personal information that you may not want others to know, such as your address or social security number.
- Some websites grow and change daily. Revisit websites to check for new information on your topic.
- Websites with poor grammar, misspellings, and disorganized text may have been created hastily and may not be reliable.
- Keep a critical eye on domain extensions.

Happy Web Weaving!

^{*}A URL is the full, unique address of a website/web pages/files on the Internet. URL stands for Uniform Resource Locator.

(Question 4)

4 **Which part of a website address provides important information on the authority of the source?**

- A** the home page
- B** the domain extension
- C** a bookmark
- D** a link

Read the passage and answer the following question(s).

It's the Backpack Bonanza

Would you like to have a backpack made using the latest and greatest technology?

Introducing Trick Wear's all new, terrific, believe-it-or-not backpack! Trick Wear has been making backpacks and other fantastic school, camping, and sports gear for almost thirty-five years, and nobody beats our products for superior quality and affordability.



Trick Wear has recently outdone itself with its new backpack. What's so incredible about our Bonanza Pack? It doubles as a book and supply carrier, as well as a self-cooling lunch and drink storage container. Traditional backpacks, much like the one you probably already own, have at least one pocket in which one can carry small gear such as pens, snacks, or drinks. But, what is worse than a warm drink on a blazing hot day, or a spoiled, lukewarm sandwich that may make you sick? Trick Wear has the remedy for this common problem. Trick Wear's Bonanza Pack is for **every** student, athlete, or worker because it provides all the great storage options that our other backpacks offer, with the added bonus of a refrigerated compartment for your perishable refreshments.

The How-To:

All you have to do is freeze the ice packs (included) that belong in the compartment; in the morning—before school, work, or recreation—tuck your lunch into the compartment, along with your freshly frozen ice packs and you're set! (In cold weather, the insulated pack on the Bonanza stays cold without the aid of the frozen packs.) That's convenience!

With Bonanza Pack on your back, you no longer have to worry about spoiled snacks or warm drinks that should be cool, nor will you have to fret about a lost lunch bag or box. Bonanza Pack allows you to keep your lunch with you and keep it cool. Look for a Bonanza Pack today at your local department or sporting goods store. You can't beat this bargain, and at just \$15.95, we guarantee you'll never go back to your old packing gear again. Stay cool with Bonanza Pack! (Available in 8 colors. Extra ice packs sold separately, three for \$5.00.)

Warranty: Three years per ice pack. Five years per backpack.

(Question 5)

5 **What feature of the believe-it-or-not backpack allows the consumer to pack perishable foods?**

- A It has many storage compartments.
- B It is very high quality and affordable.
- C It has a refrigerated compartment and icepacks.
- D It is magical.